



Louise Talma

Photo by Basil Langton

## Louise Talma Honored

It was a way of saying thank you and a warm tribute to Louise Talma on Saturday night, February 5, when a host of her friends, colleagues on the Hunter faculty, students, and other music lovers gathered in the Hunter College Playhouse for a concert billed as "A Celebration for Louise."

Performing with her in the presentation of her own compositions were friends and colleagues, among them Phyllis Curtin, Charles Bressler, Lukas Foss, Herbert Rogers, Peter Basquin and the Gregg Smith Singers. One of the numbers, "Voices of Peace," which she composed in 1973, was performed for the first time in New York.

The Monday after the concert, Louise Talma began her 50th year of teaching at Hunter College. Now Professor Emeritus, she had taught three courses in the fall semester and is now teaching one in the spring, all without pay. "I know I can call on her," says James Harrison, chairman of the music department, "anytime I need help. She's a fine teacher in the old tradition, with high standards, and she's demanding of herself and of her students."

Miss Talma, who was born in France while her mother, an American, was singing opera there, is a composer of note. She was the first woman to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the first American woman composer to have a full-length, three-act opera produced by a major European opera house. This was "The Alceste," which was based on a libretto by Thornton Wilder, and was performed by the Frankfurt Opera Company.

Her works have been performed by the Baltimore Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the NBC Symphony, and the Milwaukee Symphony, and have been recorded by Composers Recordings, Desto Records, the Musical Heritage Society, and Avant Records.

Miss Talma was educated in New York at the Institute of Musical Art; now the Juilliard School of Music; at New York University; Columbia University; and in France, at the Fontainebleau School of Music, where she studied composition with Nadia Boulanger, and piano with Isidore Philipp.

She has received a number of grants and fellowships, including two Guggenheim fellowships, but it's likely the most gratifying words of recognition were in the citation she received from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. It said, in part, "Many of her admirers, who had grown accustomed to seeing or hearing her referred to as one of our foremost women composers, have noticed with pleasure in recent years that she is being referred to more and more often without any qualification at all as one of our foremost composers."